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Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun ..... (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. N'Dry (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I should like to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, our congratulations on your election. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, as well as your eminent predecessor.

The end of the cold war made possible the emergence of a new concept of security, based not only on its military aspects — that is to say, general and complete disarmament — but also on economic and social aspects of that peace to which we all aspire. My country was pleased at the enhanced role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, which today is envisaged from a broader standpoint than that of the agreements on the reduction of armaments concluded between the major military Powers. Over the past few years, there have been positive developments with regard to the control of nuclear weapons. We believe that tangible progress can be achieved if States will demonstrate true political determination and will, and this is encouraging.

Among the positive results attained I would like to mention the ratification and entry into force of the START I Treaty. We hope that this will facilitate the ratification in the near future of the START II Treaty, which provides for the reduction by the United States and Russia of two thirds of their nuclear strategic warheads and the elimination, over a 10-year period, of multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs).

I would also like to mention the historic decision adopted by 174 States on 11 May 1995 to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This constitutes a major achievement in the right direction — that is, towards a safer world in which the idea of the total elimination of nuclear weapons would no longer appear utopian. However, to attain this ultimate objective, the international community must set up conditions of confidence. Hence, Côte d'Ivoire, which is a peace-loving country, encourages the States that have not yet done so to adhere to the NPT.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime can be viable only with the establishment of regional denuclearization mechanisms. We therefore welcome the entry into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which makes the region of Latin America and the Caribbean the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. Our continent of Africa is on the right path. Hence, my country is pleased that the text establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has been finalized and this text will be signed in the near future.

With respect to chemical weapons, my delegation is pleased to announce that just recently, Côte d'Ivoire ratified the Convention on the Prohibition on the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. My country's instruments of ratification of this important disarmament text will be

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deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the very near future.

According to various United Nations documents on disarmament, there are more than 100 million land-mines scattered over all the continents, and particularly in Africa. We know the suffering this kind of device can cause for the civilian population, and what the consequences are on the general economic situation of the countries that are victims of this indiscriminate weapon. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to halt the planting of such mines, in particular the recent establishment of a fund for assistance in demining. We are pleased at the establishment by certain countries of a moratorium on the production and exportation of anti-personnel land-mines but we must recognize the fact that such a decision cannot be more than a transitory measure reflecting a will to arrive at a more ambitious solution.

My delegation feels it is time to think about an international agreement prohibiting the production, utilization and transfer of mines. This would, no doubt, be an arduous enterprise because of the commercial interests involved, and because such mines are weapons that are easy to manufacture. However, this challenge can be met if we show determination and true political will. The proposal for a revision of Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects deserves our attention. Such a revision should be based on clear and precise rules applicable to all types of conflicts.

It is pleasing to see that we are heading more and more towards a new strategy of disarmament, one which would take account of a regional approach to the problem. That, in our opinion, is a more pragmatic view conducive to transparency and the establishment of confidence-building measures with a view to halting the proliferation of weapons. Thus, the political situation and security conditions could be taken more into account in each particular region.

Africa south of the Sahara as a whole — and the West African subregion in particular — is now experiencing a state of insecurity characterized by the existence of small, illegal arms, both in urban centres and in rural areas. This is promoting large-scale banditry, the forming of armed bands, and a general tendency towards self-defence by populations whose security is threatened.

We are pleased, in this respect, at the cooperation recently established between the United Nations and the Republic of Mali on means of putting an end to this phenomenon. Côte d'Ivoire, as a neighbour of Mali, is also concerned at this problem. My country would like to reaffirm solemnly its commitment to regional cooperation in regard to disarmament, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/117 B, in which the Assembly

> "encourages all States to consider and develop as far as possible, regional solutions in the matter of arms reduction and disarmament".

The end of ideological confrontation between the two blocs rightly gave rise to the expectation or the hope that resources, which had been devoted to military purposes would now be reallocated to sectors of social and economic development and to protection of the environment. Unfortunately, we have had to recognize that this view is not shared by all. We do not however despair of reaching this objective. Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that questions relating to disarmament and thus to international security cannot be discussed in isolation from those of economic and social development, and that taking them duly into account seems absolutely essential.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakstan to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the lofty post of Chairman of the First Committee, to extend our congratulations to all members of the Bureau, and to express our conviction that under your leadership the Committee will be able to make the most expeditious decisions on its traditionally complicated agenda. I would like to assure you that you can count on the full cooperation of the delegation of Kazakstan.

In June of this year, the President of the Republic of Kazakstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, speaking at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for the first time, set forth a new concept of disarmament processes and international security, in accordance with the new challenges, and stated that the existing systems of international security needed a fresh approach and needed to be fundamentally improved in the light of the new geopolitical situation and geo-economic trends at the close of the century.

Our Head of State laid particular emphasis on the fact that the practical measures taken by the Republic of Kazakstan in the area of international security and disarmament were designed primarily to ensure its

unconditional and full compliance with all the commitments it had entered into under international treaties and agreements in this field.

After achieving independence, Kazakstan adopted a historic decision to reject its nuclear inheritance, which became an important precondition for the emergence of our State as a natural and inalienable part of modern civilization. Kazakstan's repudiation of all types of nuclear weapons was a natural choice for our country, which had suffered so much from nuclear-weapon testing. It is now known that during the almost 45 years the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was in use, and as a result of 459 explosions, including 113 in the atmosphere, more than 500,000 inhabitants of Kazakstan were exposed to radioactive radiation. These tests affected not only the lives and health of the population but also the ecological balance of our vast territory.

The second thing which influenced Kazakstan's decision to rid itself of nuclear weapons is the fact that the Republic's foreign policy is based on a pacific commitment to a generally accepted code of conduct in matters connected with international security. Weighing all these factors, the leadership of Kazakstan adopted a resolute policy aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons.

In December 1993, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakstan ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With its adherence to the Treaty Kazakstan turned a page on the part of its history connected with the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons on its territory.

Kazakstan confirmed its commitment to international obligations by being the first to ratify the START I Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol. We were the first of the Commonwealth of Independent States to withdraw all tactical weapons from our territory, almost five years ago.

In April of this year, the withdrawal of more than 1,200 units of nuclear warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles from our territory was completed. On 30 May 1995, the last remaining underground nuclear device at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was destroyed. Now Kazakstan is totally free of nuclear weapons.

The decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT with regard to the indefinite extension of the Treaty has gone down as a truly historic decision and we share the view of the Secretary-General, as expressed in his report on the work of the Organization, that that decision and the other commitments entered into by States Parties, which were reflected in the documents of the Conference, have strengthened the non-proliferation regime and made a substantial contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the basis of the need for the comprehensive strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and the establishment of favourable preconditions for eliminating nuclear weapons, Kazakstan advocates the early conclusion of negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Kazakstan has shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site for good and has made a historic contribution to the process leading to a nuclear-test ban. Kazakstan favours a ban on all nuclear-weapons tests, including tests for peaceful purposes. For its part, our Republic is ready to participate in a practical way to enhance the monitoring of observance of the future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Speaking at the session of the Conference on Disarmament, our Head of State proposed the inclusion of three modern seismic stations situated in Kazakstan in a global monitoring network which could provide effective control.

From the rostrum of the Conference on Disarmament, President Nazarbaev appealed to nuclear-weapon States to extend the moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests until the relevant treaty is signed and he urged those who continued tests to respect the moratorium.

In his statement on 12 April 1995, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakstan welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Kazakstan fully supports the proposal that security assurances should carry the mandatory legal force of an international instrument. One of the possible solutions to this question, as suggested in the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakstan at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, could be the adoption of a protocol on security assurances which would be an integral part of the Treaty itself.

Kazakstan supports the agreed mandate for the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to hold negotiations on a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We must begin negotiations on halting the

production of such material and we must bring into those negotiations all States that possess such material, especially the nuclear-weapon States. Equally necessary is the improvement of inspections carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Having ratified the Agreement with the IAEA for the Application of Safeguards in connection with the NPT, Kazakstan became part of an international system of control over the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and its components.

We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the illicit trafficking in nuclear materials which is still going on, despite the fact that the States Parties to the NPT have decided on the indefinite extension of the Treaty and we support the efforts of the IAEA to solve this problem. In this connection, implementation of the proposal made by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, on the holding in the spring of 1996 of a meeting to discuss the problems of nuclear security could provide an important step towards joint efforts to prevent and prohibit the illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

Against the backdrop of a radical reduction in nuclear weapons, questions relating to the place and role of conventional armed forces and weapons in strengthening peace and maintaining stability should be looked at carefully. The signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) served to create a new climate of trust on the continent. Kazakstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and, since 1992, has provided the necessary information to that Register.

Kazakstan is one of the 159 States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and is at this time preparing for its ratification. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, our national legislation will be brought into line with it. It will be brought up to date in national terms, also.

Kazakstan attaches great importance to participation in international bodies concerned with security. This is a priority area of our foreign policy. In our opinion, the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — of which my country is a member and the area of responsibility of which includes not only Europe but also Central Asia — have been very successful. Kazakstan is continuing its activities in implementation of the initiative of President Nazarbaev taken at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to convene a meeting on cooperation and confidence-building measures in Asia.

In this connection, I should like to inform the Committee that a second meeting of the special working group established to prepare such a meeting, in which 15 Asian countries participated, took place in September in Alma-Ata. Two official documents were adopted as well as a decision to accelerate efforts to prepare for the meeting at the level of Heads of foreign political ministries of the countries involved.

The fiftieth session of the General Assembly marks a historic anniversary and, in that context, the current discussion in the First Committee of important issues of disarmament and security has a priority place on the international agenda. It is of especial importance in preparing joint practical approaches to the solution of these burning problems of the contemporary world. As in the past, the delegation of Kazakstan is prepared to cooperate in a constructive way with our colleagues in the First Committee to achieve these goals.

Mr. Yumjav (Mongolia): At the crossroads of the two millenniums the world find itself at a historic juncture, relieved of the cold-war past and facing a future that holds both opportunities and challenges. This situation calls for revamping our conventional notions of peace and development and adjusting them to today's realities. In this regard the Secretary-General's stimulating and farsighted reports "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" and their subsequent supplements help greatly in our collective reflection on our vision of the future.

Although the world has been spared another holocaust, millions of lives have been lost in so-called local conflicts. Millions more are dying of poverty, hunger, utter deprivation and lack of access to basic health services. It is being increasingly recognized that the security of the rich is threatened by the insecurity of the poor.

The year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has seen a number of positive developments in the field of disarmament. The most important event of 1995 in that field was the successful outcome of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We hope that the package of decisions adopted by the Conference will lay a sound basis for

furthering the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The document "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" adopted by the Review Conference sets the target date for the completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty at not later than 1996. We are gratified to note that progress along that road has been made during this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament has done commendable work, particularly in the areas of the international monitoring system and on the implementing organization. A zero-yield comprehensive test ban announced by the United States and followed by France and the United Kingdom and relevant statements by the Russian Federation will help significantly to speed up the negotiations on the treaty. We are, however, cognizant of the fact that many substantive issues, such as entry into force, on-site inspection, the role of the International Data Centre and the issues of funding will have to be dealt with in a constructive and determined manner so that the negotiations can be concluded by the specified target date.

As regards the issue of banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapon or other nuclear explosive purposes, it is important that the Conference on Disarmament agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee with a mandate to negotiate a treaty. But it is regrettable that the Conference failed to begin the work of that Ad Hoc Committee during its 1995 session. My delegation is of the view that a cut-off convention would be a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

In the above-mentioned "Principles and Objectives" the nuclear-weapon States are also urged, pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, to exercise utmost restraint on nuclear testing. We fully share the grave concern expressed by many delegations at the continuation and resumption of nuclear tests. Such tests, in our view, will have a negative bearing on the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We urge all nuclear-weapon States to continue to eschew nuclear testing in order to maintain the present political climate that is favourable to the negotiations.

The underlying purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be served if the non-nuclear-weapon States are adequately assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this respect Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and the unilateral statements made by nuclear-weapon States are welcome developments, auguring well for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. But it is clear that further steps are needed in order to allay the concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States. The non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT deserve nothing short of an internationally negotiated, legally binding document containing unconditional and unlimited assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Mongolia is in favour of the early entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons on Their Destruction and its effective implementation. Therefore, we consider that early ratification of the Convention by its signatories, especially by major declared possessors of chemical weapons, is of especial importance. My delegation appreciates the work carried out by the Preparatory Committee of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with a view to stimulating the early ratification of the Convention. Mongolia deposited the instrument of ratification of the Convention early in 1995.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the progress made in the deliberations with regard to the establishment of a verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention. We hope that the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts will be able to conclude its work at an early date and present specific proposals for a verification protocol for the Review Conference next year.

The Mongolian delegation commends the work of the Disarmament Commission on the issue of international arms transfers, with special emphasis on illicit trafficking in arms. We hope that the progress achieved will facilitate conclusion of the work next year.

My delegation appreciates the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen international restrictions on land-mines, as well as its action on mine clearance. As representatives are aware, the General Assembly, at its last two sessions, adopted resolutions calling for a moratorium on the export of land-mines. It is encouraging to note that several countries have already heeded that call.

As for mine-clearance activities, the international meeting held last July in Geneva was a valuable undertaking. It is important that it resulted in enhanced international awareness of the land-mine problem, in all its dimensions, and in increased international cooperation in this field.

We also welcome the decision taken by the recently concluded Review Conference of the States parties to the Convention on certain conventional weapons. I refer to the adoption of an additional protocol prohibiting blinding laser weapons. Although it is regrettable that the Review Conference was unable to reach agreement on anti-personnel land-mines, it is important that the States parties decided to continue their work next year, with a view to resolving outstanding issues.

Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Regional Centres for peace, disarmament and development, my delegation expresses its deep regret that, at a time when the importance of regional approaches is increasingly recognized, these Centres will be closed because of the inadequacy of financial resources. We are, in any case, of the view that the Kathmandu Centre in Nepal, which plays an important role in establishing a habit of dialogue in this highly diverse and complex region of the world, should continue its commendable activities.

Mr. Ronneberg (Marshall Islands): Please permit me, Sir, to offer you our congratulations on your election to the high office of Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of our support and cooperation. Our congratulations are also extended to the other officers of the Committee.

The legacy of nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands has caused us great pain. We are steadily unravelling the large amount of information now available to us on the nature and consequences of nuclear-testing activities there and are deeply disturbed and alarmed at what we are uncovering. We have even discovered that the then United Nations Secretary-General collaborated with the United States authorities in suppressing a petition from the Marshall Islands requesting that the United Nations put a stop to the nuclear tests in 1954.

We want to bring to the attention of the international community the reality and magnitude of the effects of these tests on our health, our environment and our future development as a nation. We also want representatives to become aware of our daily struggle to cope with a situation whose radiation-induced nature continues to haunt us, whose complexity, in terms of solutions, is far beyond our capacity to handle, and whose conception was solely for the purpose of countering hostilities and tensions that bore no relationship whatsoever to the Marshall Islands.

So I ask Member States, when they hear us speaking out about the perils of radiation, to think about these in terms of human suffering and to try to visualize Marshallese children being born faceless, with no bones, or with missing or extra limbs — the jellyfish babies, as some have come to call them — and the irreparable damage wreaked upon the reproductive health of their mothers.

As was stated at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, we are grateful that our former Trustee has taken some steps to rectify the problems that we face, and recent developments give us some hope for the safe resettlement of Rongelap Atoll. We also note the following instances of international recognition of the problems we face.

The Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons took special note of the international community's responsibility to assist the inhabitants and restore the environment of the former United Nations Trust Territories adversely affected by nuclear-weapon-testing programmes.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, held this year in Beijing, recognized that development and the concept and practice of environmental degradation are incongruent and that the use and testing of nuclear weapons is undeniably one factor that destroys the environment and displaces people, as well as inducing high health risks.

The South Pacific Forum, held last month in Papua New Guinea, called upon all Governments and international organizations with expertise in the field of cleaning up and disposing radioactive contaminants to give appropriate remedial assistance when so requested by affected countries. The Forum also noted the existence of a special responsibility towards those peoples of the former United Nations Trust Territory administered by the United States who had been adversely affected by nuclear-weapon tests conducted during the period of trusteeship. This responsibility includes the safe resettlement of displaced human populations and the restoration to economic productivity of affected areas, the provision of adequate health care, and compensation for loss of life, land and health.

As if our own four decades of painful experience of the dreadful business of nuclear testing were not enough, the beautiful Pacific was this year subjected to the trauma of yet another series of nuclear testing, intended to continue until May next year. I refer to the resumption by the French of nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll, French Polynesia. It is probably because we are far removed from the metropolitan centres that certain people tend to look at

the Pacific as the "ideal desert" for nuclear testing — as one French official recently put it. Often overlooked is the fact that all island nations spread out across the length and breadth of the Pacific are connected by this mighty ocean. Nuclear damage to one poses immense long-term implications and dangers for others in the region.

As people who are living the nightmarish experience of nuclear testing, we cannot and will not accept the weak argument that the current tests are safe for any of our Pacific neighbours and friends. Nor can we accept the continuation of this irresponsible practice in the region. We have denounced its resumption from the beginning, and we shall continue to do so.

Each time one of these underground blasts occurs, a massive bubble about the size of the entire United Nations Plaza is created in the basalt rock. Mururoa is a relatively large atoll, but there have been over 100 of these tests. The result is the creation of a large honeycomb structure underground, and we all know that this is not a very stable arrangement. One more jolt might be all that is needed to collapse the entire atoll, unleashing a torrent of pent-up radiation on the Pacific islands and our neighbours on the Pacific Rim.

We do not want this to happen. We cannot effectively prevent any damage to our home and livelihoods. No scientific studies have been done on the cumulative effects of the explosions — at least, none that we are privy to. We urge that the strictest environmental-impact assessment be carried out by the French authorities immediately, before continued testing. We are not reassured by their statements in this building.

This is why His Excellency President Amata Kabua of the Marshall Islands wrote a personal letter to President Chirac. He tried, in his own way, in his own words, to convey the utter horror that we have been exposed to. He tried to explain why we do not want to see any more tests. The letter went unanswered for several days. And then the first test occurred on Mururoa.

As we stated in the General Assembly, we joined in the support for New Zealand's case against France in the International Court of Justice. We took this action with great regret as France has always been a constructive partner in our relationship with the developed world. It is simply incomprehensible to us that this great nation of culture, science and fine arts can visit such an abomination upon us in the Pacific. We protested to the French authorities, but the first tests went ahead any way.

The International Court of Justice declined to hear our case, but the decision was based entirely on technicalities. France should not think that this is a victory, as many of the Judges pointed out the strong moral and legal background for halting the tests. My delegation strongly disagrees with what the French Foreign Minister said in his statement to the General Assembly a few weeks ago, claiming that the tests were environmentally safe.

Just look at the situation I have described in the Marshall Islands.

We have also received documentation from a number of eminent scientists which would at the very least call for caution. Most recently, at a hearing held by the European Parliament, France was warned by the distinguished scientist and vulcanologist Pierre Vincent that the Mururoa site was unstable. He stated that further tests could destabilize the atoll and cause landslides. In his view, the risk of landslides would remain even if the French Government cancelled its planned nuclear tests. It is this type of scientific report which is causing so much worry for my Government.

Furthermore, France is a State Party to the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The principle of environmental impact assessments and the precautionary approach are not compatible with the activities they are carrying out. The offer to carry out an impact assessment after the tests are finished is a ridiculous proposal, since by then it might be far too late. The tests are violating treaties and violating our environment, and I also think they are a violation of our human rights. The tests must stop, and they must stop now.

In their collective voice the leaders of the countries of the South Pacific Forum issued a statement during their meeting in Papua New Guinea, expressing their extreme outrage at the resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific. They demanded that France desist from any further tests. The outrage was especially compounded by the intransigence of France and the People's Republic of China in persisting with their nuclear tests in the face of the strong views of the Pacific region. My Government stands by the decision announced two weeks ago by the Chairman of the Forum, Sir Julius Chan, that France is no longer invited to the post-Forum dialogue.

We fully support the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and we will also work

actively to achieve a breakthrough for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In this regard, I wish to offer my full support to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. That body can serve as an important avenue for discussion and better relations between States in the region and can promote greater understanding and peaceful coexistence between our nations.

It is my delegation's view that we can achieve much in this new international climate of cooperation and common understandings. The cold war is over, as far as we know. What possible threats are there to the nuclear Powers today that require them to further refine and test these terrible weapons? We must be frank and open in our discussions of this subject. The true purpose of these tests is to allow for further refinement and development of more sophisticated weapons.

These views will form the basis of my delegation's negotiating position on the issues before this Committee. We will seek to support a resolution on the completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Furthermore, we will support additional work under the NPT regime. The work of the regional centres is also worthy of our continued support, and we will seek to join other, like-minded countries in wholeheartedly condemning the current series of nuclear tests by France and China.

Mr. Fostervoll (Norway): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election as officers of this important Committee.

Anniversaries are often used as a reason for taking stock of past and present failures and triumphs. I will not dwell here on the past, as the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, but simply express optimism with regard to the future.

Indeed, we have moved ahead quite substantially from the confrontations on international security and disarmament matters that so strongly marked the first 50 years of this Organization. Today we are faced with a more complex picture in which a number of issues are interlinked, making clear analysis more challenging as the concept of security is steadily broadened. Thus, developments in the Middle East, Bosnia and the former Soviet Union, as well as the environmental threats associated with the dismantling and destruction of nuclear and chemical weapons, all have a strong impact on the issues that are traditionally included in the realm of disarmament.

Although many hurdles remain and new problems will undoubtedly arise, there are clear signs of progress on many of the issues in the field of arms control and international security.

The reduction of nuclear weapons in the countries formerly opposing each other in the East-West conflict continues according to schedule.

Efforts to curb the spread of weapons of mass destruction are finally paying off. The decision to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) indefinitely is an achievement of historic significance.

The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, which has led to the largest reduction in conventional arms ever, has also instituted an information and verification regime that is unprecedented in its openness, thus establishing a strong, new sense of security on the regional level with a global impact.

We are encouraged by the progress made in the negotiations towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty, particularly on scope, funding and the international monitoring system. We welcome the commitments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to a true zero-yield ban. It would truly be an important contribution to the negotiations if all nuclear-weapon States could confirm that they have identical positions. With continued good will and hard work, a universal and effectively verifiable test-ban treaty can be concluded during the first half of 1996 and be ready for signature by the opening of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

This year the Nobel Committee decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. This decision reflects the widespread public sentiment against nuclear weapons. Those States that have not yet stopped their nuclear-test programmes should take particular note of this year's award. We see the Peace Prize as giving fresh inspiration to all efforts to promote disarmament and *détente* and to make nuclear weapons superfluous.

It has been a long-standing position of the Norwegian Government that continued or resumed nuclear testing by any country may complicate the negotiations and make universal ratification and implementation of, as well as adherence to, a comprehensive test-ban treaty more

difficult. We therefore strongly deplore both the French and Chinese nuclear tests, particularly in the light of the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States at the NPT Conference earlier this year to exercise the utmost restraint as regards future nuclear testing. These tests represent a set-back for international non-proliferation efforts and may constitute a risk to human health and the environment in the areas affected. Norway therefore again urges the Chinese and French authorities to abandon their current nuclear-testing programmes and refrain from any further nuclear testing.

The next priority item on the disarmament agenda should be an agreement banning production of fissile material for weapons purposes. Norway is particularly concerned about the safe and controlled handling of fissile material that has been used for weapons purposes. As a consequence of the nuclear disarmament process, spent fissile material is now being released into a non-secure environment. It is important to devise ways to account for existing stocks of fissile weapons materials within or parallel to the future international cut-off regime. In this connection, we again call for the establishment of a regime that will include declarations of stockpiles of all weapons-grade materials, accompanied by other appropriate transparency measures. Furthermore, we call on the nuclear-weapon States to contribute to enhanced confidence and stability, globally as well as regionally, by providing enhanced transparency with regard to their nuclear-weapon arsenals.

My country has been actively engaged in the key area of verification of a nuclear-test-ban treaty. We note with satisfaction that a global seismic monitoring system was successfully put into full-scale operation for testing purposes on 1 January this year.

It is now important to begin realistic testing of the other technologies envisaged for the monitoring system so that an operational system can be ready at the earliest possible time. The overall goal would be to develop and demonstrate the synergies of the different verification technologies in the eventual comprehensive test-ban treaty monitoring system.

Particular attention should be given to the political and economic reasons for the funding of the international verification system. International funding should be based on an equitable distribution of costs in order to avoid placing unreasonable economic burdens on countries whose participation is essential to the provision of global coverage. International funding will also be the best guarantee that the monitoring system will remain an effective deterrent against clandestine nuclear testing. Such financing will ensure that monitoring stations in all participating countries can be maintained to the highest standards required, without being dependent on available resources in each individual country.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a most important instrument for ensuring regional as well as global stability. It outlaws a category of weapons of mass destruction that are relatively easy to acquire, but which can have devastating effects on civilian populations. As the former Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Norway urges all Parties to the Convention that have not already done so, to ratify it without delay. Early ratification by the United States and the Russian Federation, the two declared possessors of chemical weapons, is of particular importance. The international community now awaits the entry into force of this landmark disarmament agreement.

Over the past three years, a substantial effort has been made to clarify the possibilities of adding a verification protocol to the biological and toxin weapons Convention. Such verification measures would undoubtedly be an important addition to the Convention. These efforts need to be pursued with a view to reaching a conclusion at the next Review Conference, in 1996.

Greater transparency in military matters and the systematic nurturing of confidence among States are key elements in bringing about a more stable, prosperous and better governed world community. Accumulation of conventional armaments can only trigger mutual suspicion and countermeasures. Rivalry involving the possible acquisition of weapons of mass destruction has a particular potency for edging regional stability out of control. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms performs an important function in increasing international confidence in so far as States Members of the United Nations lend their full support. Our future efforts should be directed along two tracks: first, the enlargement of the number of participants and, secondly, the extension of the scope of data submitted with the aim of submitting all relevant data.

Land-mines are among the most insidious weapons commonly used in war. They continue to spread terror for years or even decades after hostilities have ended. Norway will therefore continue to work for a total ban on the production, stockpiling, trade and use of anti-personnel land-mines.

My Government regrets that we did not achieve agreement on revising the land-mine protocol during the Review Conference of the 1981 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. On our part, we are ready to resume work in Geneva in January and April of 1996 with a view to achieving substantial improvements in this Protocol.

The long-overdue issue of expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is still with us despite the very clear mandate given to the Conference on Disarmament by the General Assembly last year. The laudable efforts by the President of the Conference on Disarmament to achieve progress represent a step in the right direction. It is our strong hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament will make the proposed review of the final decision to include the 23 countries on the O'Sullivan list at the earliest possible time. Such an expansion should not exclude the admission of any other country willing to undertake the obligations of membership in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): We are gathered here at an important juncture in the history of the United Nations. This year the United Nations completes half a century of service to mankind. During this period, the Organization has been able to withstand the vicissitudes of time and to live up to the expectations of the founding fathers of the Charter. The period also saw the Organization grow from 51 States to 185, thus encompassing all of humanity. These facts speak eloquently to the Organization's strength and viability, its capacity to grow and, most important, its universality. As we stand at the threshold of the third millennium, we should resolve to make the United Nations even more viable and robust. While the Organization can build on its achievements, it is necessary for it to perceive realistically and meet effectively the challenges to international peace and security in the coming century.

One positive accomplishment realized by the international community in this memorable year was the successful conclusion of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Those who went through the exercise and others who observed the long and arduous negotiations will no doubt agree that the indefinite extension of the Treaty was not an easy task. Sri Lanka proposes to introduce a draft resolution on the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT and hopes that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Although the extension issue is now behind us, the rest is not. In this regard, the nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility for honouring their part of the bargain. In keeping with the commitment given by them, these States should fulfil their treaty obligations for nuclear disarmament in good faith and commit themselves to chart a course for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within the shortest possible time-frame. The argument proffered by some nuclear-weapon States that nuclear weapons cannot be "disinvented" is empty rhetoric. If these countries have the political will and the courage, eliminating nuclear weapons will not be an impossible task. After all, we have prohibited chemical weapons and the same can be done to nuclear weapons as well.

My delegation is pleased with the progress made by the Conference on Disarmament to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty. However, we share the view of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, who expressed his sense of disappointment at the lack of a consensus on the basic issues, particularly, on the scope. It is evident that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban should hasten its pace if it is to meet the goal of signing the treaty in 1996.

In this regard, Sri Lanka is fully supportive of the call made by President Clinton of the United States that the Conference on Disarmament should complete negotiations by the end of the first part of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, so that the treaty can be ready for signature by the fall of 1996. In the eventuality that the negotiations should not be completed by the end of the first part of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, the Conference should work between the first and the second parts of its 1996 session to complete its task.

Sri Lanka remains strongly supportive of the view expressed in the Conference on Disarmament by many delegations that there is no room for peaceful nuclear explosions under a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My delegation therefore appreciated the lead given by the United States and followed by France and the United Kingdom for a true zero-yield comprehensive test-ban treaty. We urge China and the Russian Federation to follow suit.

Sri Lanka appreciates the moratoriums declared by three of the five nuclear-weapon States on nuclear-weapon testing. The recent nuclear-weapon tests carried out by the remaining two nuclear-weapon States have been received with widespread condemnation by the international

community. These tests, carried out in the aftermath of the indefinite extension of the NPT, certainly do not help enhance the climate of confidence desirable for the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations. Rather than conducting tests for assuring the safety and reliability of existing nuclear weapons or for introducing a new generation of nuclear weapons, the nuclear-weapon States would do well to concentrate on finding alternative ways of assuring the safety and security of their countries in an environment devoid of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka's position on the continued testing of nuclear weapons was clearly reflected in the statements made by my delegation to the Conference on Disarmament on 29 June and 21 September.

While the Conference on Disarmament has made progress in its negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, regrettably it has not made headway in other items on its agenda in 1995. Following protracted negotiations, the Conference agreed in March on a mandate for establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on banning the production of fissionable materials for weapon purposes. However, the Ad Hoc Committee could not commence its work owing to issues extraneous to the work of the Committee. Similarly, disagreements within the Conference prevented it from re-establishing ad hoc committees on negative security assurances and outer space. Sri Lanka regrets this impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, which prevented this single multilateral disarmament negotiating body from discharging its responsibilities effectively.

Among the issues that drew sharp divisions within the Conference on Disarmament was the proposal to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on transparency in armaments. Last year, in its resolution 49/75 C the General Assembly invited the Conference to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments. This was done in consideration of the fact that the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Committee by General Assembly resolution 46/36 L had elapsed by the end of December 1994. The view expressed by many delegations to the Conference on Disarmament was that, if transparency were to be encouraged, it should not be done selectively. In our view, transparency should cover, not only a selected group of conventional weapons, but also all types of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

However, if there is a consensus within the Conference on Disarmament for considering conventional weapons in all their aspects, my delegation is willing to support such a position, provided that a suitable mandate for an ad hoc committee is decided upon after careful consideration.

Most important, my delegation is of the view that there is a case, particularly following the successful Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, for establishing an ad hoc committee or a negotiating mechanism in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament. This is a subject of vital importance to all members of the international community. It is therefore not prudent to allow this matter, which affects the interests of all mankind, to be negotiated bilaterally between the two major nuclear-weapon States or by the five nuclear-weapon States among themselves. The Conference on Disarmament has a proven track record of dealing with such crucial subjects as chemical weapons and a nuclear-test ban. Therefore, my delegation is at variance with the view expressed by some nuclear-weapon States that the question of nuclear disarmament should be negotiated outside the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation shares the frustration of those countries which, for many years, have been seeking to serve on the Conference on Disarmament. More than two years have gone by since Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia presented his proposal to the Conference on Disarmament, the implementation of which would have ensured the admission of 23 new members to the Conference. Despite the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/77 B that the Conference on Disarmament make every effort to reach a solution resulting, by the beginning of 1995, in a significant expansion of its composition, the progress achieved by the Conference on this score left much to be desired.

Sri Lanka was not an enthusiastic supporter of the two-stage process adopted by the Conference on Disarmament on 21 September, as my delegation was among the overwhelming majority that supported the O'Sullivan package. Our position is in favour of admitting the 23 countries to the Conference simultaneously and with equal rights and obligations with immediate effect. Extraneous considerations, whether political or security, should not be allowed to delay the resolution of this matter any further. We therefore urge the Conference to complete the two-stage approach began on 21 September by admitting all 23 candidates to the Conference at least by the beginning of the first part of its 1996 session, if not earlier.

While the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament are attempting to grapple with the question of transparency in armaments, insidious developments relating

to the procurement and transfer of arms by terrorists, insurgents, mercenaries and drug traffickers are occurring at an alarming rate. Huge quantities of small arms, as well as state-of-the art weapons released in the aftermath of the cold war, are being illegally channelled to vulnerable regions, thus affecting the safety and security of the countries of those regions. More often than not, it is small States such as my own that have to suffer the consequences of this illegal arms trade.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/75 M on measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms. This resolution recognized the availability of massive quantities of conventional weapons and especially their illicit transfer, often associated with destabilizing activities. Ironically, States falling victim to such illegal activities often have to defend themselves practically with their arms tied behind them, for these Governments are called upon by the international community, including the arms-exporting countries themselves, scrupulously to observe international humanitarian laws when combating the destabilizing forces. Those Governments that are thus accused of failure to live up to international humanitarian standards are subjected to unilateral arms embargoes imposed on them by the arms-exporting countries, whereas the perpetrators of violence who procure their weapons, perhaps from the very same sources, are never held accountable for their illegal and destabilizing activities. Instead, they are eulogized as heroes, their actions carried out with gross impunity and condoned as struggles for national liberation or self-determination.

The international community therefore has a special responsibility to check and curb these illicit arms transfers as a matter of the highest priority, as terrorism has emerged as the principal public enemy, often transcending national boundaries and threatening to tear apart the very fabric of civil society. Hence, the imperative need for this Committee to study this issue in depth and take remedial measures before more and more vulnerable States fall victim to the illegal arms trade.

For nearly two decades, in cooperation with the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean region, Sri Lanka has striven to establish a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The international political and security climate that existed during this period prevented us from achieving that objective. However, positive developments in international political relations have offered us new opportunities for enhancing peace and security in the region.

Great-Power rivalry is a thing of the past. It is a widely accepted fact that great-Power rivalry has been replaced by a climate of confidence, trust and cooperation resulting in a renewed interest in matters relating to the Indian Ocean. For example, in addition to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in New York and the Indian Ocean Maritime Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) in Colombo, there have been new initiatives resulting in meetings at Grand Bay in Mauritius and Perth in Australia, with a view to exploring the possibilities of co-operation, particularly in the economic field, among the Indian Ocean Rim countries.

Sri Lanka, while supporting these new initiatives, holds the view that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean remains the primary vehicle for taking practical measures to ensure conditions of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. My delegation has noticed the renewed interest in the Indian Ocean expressed by the three permanent members of the Security Council with whom the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee had consultations during the course of the year, particularly on the new alternative approaches adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee. My delegation strongly supports the view expressed in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee that the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean should take an active part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee at a time when the Committee is examining its future role and elaborating alternative approaches.

In conclusion, permit me briefly to refer to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Development in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Sri Lanka regrets to note the declining financial support for these Centres, which may result in their closure.

While recognizing the predicament faced by the United Nations as a result of dwindling financial resources to maintain the Centres at a time when the Organization itself is experiencing a difficult financial situation, Sri Lanka is of the view that closing these Centres would result in the loss of the regional dimension of disarmament, with all its consequences.

Recognizing the importance of a regional approach to confidence-building measures and disarmament, Sri Lanka wishes to plead with the more affluent countries in the Asia-Pacific region not to permit the Kathmandu Centre to be closed down for want of financial resources. We are fully aware of the extent of the services rendered by the Kathmandu Centre. Countries in the region should therefore contribute generously to realize its potential.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): Mr. Chairman, your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session is indeed a fitting tribute to your outstanding diplomatic skills and high professionalism, as well as to the reputation of Mongolia as a country with a great historical tradition. On behalf of my delegation, as well as my own behalf, I wish to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. Our felicitations also go to other members of the Bureau.

The Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York from 17 April to 12 May 1995, was one of the most important international conferences dealing with disarmament in several decades. The Conference took a momentous decision to extend the NPT indefinitely. This was one of three decisions adopted by the Conference, namely, the decision on the extension of the Treaty, the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the decision on strengthening the review process for the Treaty.

Accordingly, my delegation takes the view that the decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely must be considered as part of the package deal reached at the Conference, and that it conferred on the nuclear-weapon States an added obligation to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures, leading to the total elimination of these weapons.

It is regrettable that the nuclear-weapon States apparently retain their cold-war mindset with regard to nuclear weapons. The cold war is over. There is no justification whatsoever for retaining the nuclear deterrence doctrines, predicated on the first use of nuclear weapons. Today's realities and prudence dictate that these nuclear deterrence doctrines be abandoned, and be replaced by new concepts. One such new concept relates to the strictly defensive nuclear posture and no-first-use policy, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Another such concept relates to the twin approach of the effective implementation of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, on the one hand, and non-proliferation of these weapons, on the other. For nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are like two sides of the same coin, and are inseparable.

Two steps are essential: first, the taking of effective measures for nuclear disarmament, with the ultimate objective of the total elimination of these weapons, and secondly, the process of de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons.

It is the conviction of my delegation that the only satisfactory and truly effective way to remove the nuclear threat is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Our vision is a nuclear-weapon-free world. No more. No less.

We welcome the bilateral efforts by the Russian Federation and the United States of America for the commencement of the process of nuclear disarmament and the conclusion of START I and START II agreements. We look forward to the full implementation of these important Treaties. We also take note with appreciation of the unilateral measures taken by some nuclear-weapon States in the field of nuclear arms control.

However, it is essential that all nuclear-weapon States be involved in the process of nuclear disarmament. It also requires further deep reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States.

For these reasons, it is imperative that nuclear disarmament be given high priority in both bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations and that the Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral negotiating forum dealing with disarmament — establish at the beginning of its 1996 session an appropriate negotiating mechanism for nuclear disarmament.

In the aftermath of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the following issues will be the litmus tests for the political will of the nuclear-weapon States: nuclear disarmament, which I have just described; the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT); a ban on fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and security assurances — negative and positive — for non-nuclear-weapon States.

At present, the CTBT is the top priority on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, and it is imperative that the CTBT negotiations be concluded in good time in 1996. At the 1995 NPT Conference, States parties to the Treaty, including the nuclear-weapon States, also set the target for the completion of the CTBT negotiations not later than 1996. In order to meet this target, it is essential that the Conference on Disarmament re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban right at the beginning of its 1996 session and that the CTBT negotiations be concluded by the end of the second part of the session at the latest. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament

will be able to intensify the negotiations to conclude them successfully in good time.

In this context, we welcome the recent announcement by some nuclear-weapon States of their acceptance of the true zero-yield option. We hope that this development will pave the way for reaching consensus expeditiously on the scope of the future treaty.

Another question that needs to be addressed with urgency is that of banning fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Earlier this year, the Conference on Disarmament established the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Shannon of Canada, yet the Conference on Disarmament found itself unable to initiate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee during its 1995 session. It is incumbent on all States members of the Conference to overcome the outstanding procedural and substantive issues and to initiate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of its 1996 session.

Another question which deserves to be accorded high priority in the aftermath of the 1995 NPT Conference is that of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. We take note with appreciation of resolution 984 (1995) of the Security Council and of unilateral declarations on security assurances made by the nuclear-weapon States prior to it, but they do not measure up to the requirement of non-nuclear-weapon States.

The 1995 NPT Conference, in its decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, underscored the need to take further steps to assure non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, which could take the form of an international legally binding instrument. This constitutes a positive step. The next important step will be to conclude, at an early date, an international legally binding instrument covering both negative and positive security assurances. Accordingly, we should like to see the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances in the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 1996 session and to witness the further advancement of the substantive work of the Committee.

The recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to agree to its expanded composition, recommended by the then-Special Coordinator for Membership, Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia, is a useful interim step. Ambassador Nacer Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco was instrumental in paving the way, through his long and difficult consultations, for this decision. We commend him for his tireless efforts and for his contribution to this positive step. We earnestly hope that the membership of the 23 States will become effective at an early date.

Let me now touch briefly upon the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Centre in our region. My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation of the useful role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Centre has an excellent track record. It has contributed a lot to the promotion of public awareness, dissemination of information and the exchange of views on disarmament issues in the regional context.

At a time when there is an increasing recognition of the need for regional approaches, it would be inappropriate to close down the Regional Centre. We are in favour of cost-saving and budget cuts wherever these measures are required and justified, but the merit of each individual case should be taken into account. The case for preserving the Centre is all the more compelling since it operates solely on the funds of voluntary contributions and has its own adequate funds. We therefore recommend that the Centre be preserved and be allowed to continue to play its useful role by organizing regular annual meetings, thematic seminars and other promotional activities within the financial resources of the voluntary contributions.

In the post-cold-war and post-1995 NPT Conference era, conditions are indeed favourable for reaching concrete agreements on nuclear-arms limitation and disarmament issues. We must take advantage of these favourable conditions and make substantive progress on these crucial issues.

Mr. Oyaya (Kenya): At the outset, I should like to join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I should like to assure you and members of your Bureau of Kenya's full cooperation and support as you steer the deliberations of this Committee.

As we mark the fiftieth anniversary of this body, whose Charter expresses the intention to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", it is an opportune time to reflect and re-evaluate collectively recent developments in the field of disarmament and international

security. The year 1995 is memorable in that it also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the fiftieth anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Earlier this year, a convergence of the community of nations here in New York approved the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The decision by the States Parties to the NPT was proof of their determination to work towards a nuclear-free world. The nuclear-weapon-States should honour the commitments and security assurances made to non-nuclear-weapon States by translating these commitments into legally binding international instruments. We therefore recommend that the Conference on Disarmament continue to work on this question, with a view to concluding its work as soon as possible.

We look forward to the conclusion by 1996 of a non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty. We believe that an end to all nuclear testing by all States, in all environments, for all time, is an essential step in preventing the striving for a qualitative expansion of nuclear arsenals and further nuclear proliferation. Consequently, we are concerned at the decision by some nuclear-weapon States to resume nuclear testing. This is contrary to the understanding that had prevailed at the Conference on Disarmament that all nuclear-weapon States would exercise the utmost restraint with respect to nuclear testing pending the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. We therefore join the international community in reiterating the call for a strict observance of the moratorium on nuclear testing pending the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Kenya looks forward to the commencement of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production and stockpiling of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, and supports the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, especially as it will accelerate the negotiations on pending conventions in the field of disarmament.

It is indeed disappointing that despite the noble intentions embodied in the United Nations Charter and the end of the cold war, conflict situations still abound in the world. These conflicts undermine international peace and security, which we strive so hard to achieve, as they tend to have an intrinsic domino effect since they spill over and not only destabilize the neighbouring countries but also have an adverse effect on social and economic development. We are of the view that the resources that are being channelled for military purposes should be better utilized for social and economic development programmes.

In view of this, Kenya supports all proposals for the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification of multilateral disarmament agreements. Consequently, we believe that the implementation of the goals and principles outlined in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace and its subsequent Supplement should be given priority, as they emphasize preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. My delegation is of the view that confidence and trust among nations create an environment that would give them the confidence to disarm and develop in peace.

My delegation supports the expansion of the range of weapons included in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, since an increased level of openness and transparency in the field of armaments would enhance confidence, promote stability, help States to exercise restraint, ease tensions and strengthen international security. The Register would streamline the trade in, and control of, the movement of conventional weapons, especially transfers in volatile areas. Moreover, it would contribute to the reduction of dangerous misconceptions about the intentions of States and would also bring about restraint in the production and transfer of arms.

Kenya supports all measures designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and also the setting up of a representative intergovernmental group of experts to study the issue of non-proliferation of such weapons. To this effect, we note the restrictions on the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons, agreed upon a few days ago in Vienna at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use Of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Exclusively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as a foundation for a future comprehensive ban. We note with concern the failure of the Conference to agree on strengthening Protocol II of the Convention, on prohibitions on the use of anti-personnel land-mines. The destructive and destabilizing effect of land-mines all over the globe lingers long after the end of conflict. Unexploded land-mines and booby-traps, which litter the landscape and war zones, cause untold physical havoc to thousands of civilians. They also make it difficult for farmers to cultivate the land, thereby affecting food production. Greater attention needs to be paid to banning the production and trade in these destructive weapons.

The regional organizations and arrangements have an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Kenya, however, wishes to reiterate that the thrust of the contributions of the regional organizations and arrangements should be targeted towards preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Peace-keeping and peace enforcement should remain the primary responsibility of the United Nations. These responsibilities are enshrined in the Charter and cannot be transferred to regional organizations. We are therefore supportive of the various initiatives that have been set up for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which have been endorsed by the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, as we believe that they will contribute greatly towards attaining the objective of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Kenya therefore supports the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. We welcome the results so far of the text of a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I should like to extend to you warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are fully confident that under your able stewardship the First Committee will achieve substantive progress. I should also like to extend our felicitations to the other members of the Bureau.

This year's session of the First Committee is being held against the backdrop of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It affords us a unique opportunity for both deep reflection on our approaches to questions relating to armaments and the charting of our future endeavours to achieve disarmament.

It should be recalled that the General Assembly, spurred on by the awesome threat posed by atomic weapons and by the disquieting prospect of a nuclear arms race, focused attention from the very beginning on questions of disarmament, and in considering the regulation, reduction and elimination of armaments, it adopted a number of principles, many of which have retained their validity and relevance. By the end of the 1950s, the General Assembly had called for general and complete disarmament under effective international control to be the basic goal of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Concurrently, the Assembly adopted a number of resolutions that, in one way or another, recognized the interrelationship between the problems of disarmament and security, and touched upon the arrangements and institutions that should accompany the process of disarmament to ensure the security of States and the maintenance of international peace.

Throughout this period, worldwide alarm, reflected in numerous United Nations resolutions, grew over the fact that the threat posed by nuclear weapons remained the single most critical global issue. Although such a realization led to some partial or limited agreements during the 1960s and 1970s, *inter alia*, the partial test ban Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as SALT I and SALT II, the arms race, rather than abating, took on a momentum of its own, spiralling to more and more irrational levels, wholly disproportionate to any rational security requirements of its major protagonists.

Meanwhile, the First Special Session on Disarmament, held in 1978, rendered a substantial contribution to the required turn- around in our thinking in the nuclear and space age. The Final Document, adopted by consensus, contained a thorough analysis of the causes and consequences of the arms race, assigned priority to the nuclear issues, and conferred upon the Organization the central role and primary responsibility in all disarmament questions.

In the post-cold-war era, as a result of significant shifts in perceptions and attitudes, we have witnessed the initiation of the process of nuclear disarmament as reflected in the INF (intermediate-range nuclear forces) Treaty, which was the harbinger of further reductions in nuclear armaments and the successful conclusion of START I and START II. We also welcomed the broadening and deepening of the dimensions of disarmament, as is evident especially in the progress made in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world, in the creation of zones of peace and cooperation as well as in the prospects for the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We hope that these positive developments, which have created a new strategic environment, will lead to the renunciation of strategic doctrines and the use of nuclear weapons and thereby make a distinct contribution to the security and survival of all nations.

Clearly then, if a lesson is to be learned from the efforts of these past five decades — and my delegation believes there is — it is a reaffirmation of the principles and priorities of an earlier era and the formulation of a comprehensive and more effective strategy for reversing the arms race and accelerating the process of arms reduction and disarmament, through the machinery and procedures of the multilateral disarmament process. In this context, our

priorities now include the search for new and more stabilizing reductions of nuclear armaments with a view to their ultimate and total elimination, the curbing of the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, the banning of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the initiation of negotiations for an international convention on security assurances to non-nuclear States, and the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

It is in this context that Indonesia has joined an overwhelming majority of States to conclude the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a matter of the highest priority and an essential first step towards curbing the qualitative refinement of weapons and leading to their ultimate elimination. My delegation is, however, concerned that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament are characterized by an over-emphasis on the non-proliferation aspect, which has become the dominant theme. A candid evaluation of these negotiations makes it clear that the nuclear-weapon States seek to formulate the scope of a treaty in such a way as to make it comprehensive only for those States which do not possess these weapons, while still leaving loopholes for continued testing, using sophisticated techniques which will be beyond the purview of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such a stance is incompatible, indeed unacceptable, because it runs counter to the overwhelming demand of the international community to curb the vertical and horizontal proliferation of these abhorrent weapons.

If this trend goes unchecked, it cannot but have a profound bearing on efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It therefore behoves us to create an urgently needed new impetus and to express ourselves unequivocally so as to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible. In this context, my delegation has welcomed the United States decision to accept a zero-yield Treaty that will ban any nuclear test, no matter how small, soon after the entry into force of such a treaty. We have deplored underground testing by the two nuclear-weapon States, both on environmental and on health grounds, and also because it contravenes the spirit of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and undermines the ongoing efforts to conclude a comprehensive treaty. While urging the nuclear Powers to refrain from conducting further tests, it is imperative that conscious efforts should now be directed towards achieving by 1996 a treaty banning nuclear testing in all environments for all time without any loopholes or exceptions.

Likewise, the need to conclude a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, in view of the existing stockpiles, has become imperative, given the frightening possibility of the smuggling of these materials with potentially disastrous consequences. Regrettably, however, despite its obvious urgency, this issue has failed to make progress at the Conference on Disarmament. It is my delegation's hope that this question will be resolved expeditiously on a priority basis.

The NPT Review and Extension Conference deliberated on and addressed all aspects of the Treaty, the ramifications of which for the critical interests of all signatories have been self-evident. It was my delegation's expectation that States Parties would not only reaffirm their commitments but also comply fully with their obligations as stipulated in the Treaty. However, we were dismayed by the policies and positions of the nuclear Powers and by the maintenance of their unilateral and strategic posturing which took precedence over the fulfilment of those obligations.

Furthermore, issues long identified as critical components of the non-proliferation regime were marginalized in the decisions adopted by the Conference. These were conspicuous by the lack of specific commitments concerning: an end to the qualitative aspects of nuclear armaments; the process of nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework and under multilateral auspices; assurances of the orderly flow of technology for developing countries; and the right of non-nuclear States to credible, unconditional and legally binding security assurances. The indefinite extension of the NPT took away the sense of urgency from the obligations undertaken in article VI of the Treaty and thereby perpetuated and legitimized the possession of nuclear weapons. It was particularly regrettable that the Conference failed to adopt a final declaration, thereby reflecting the fundamental differences between the nuclear-haves and the have-nots.

The fact that the Conference agreed on strengthening the review process for the Treaty as well as on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament should not breed complacency. Nuclear disarmament remains an imperative. Hence, our priority should continue to be one of seeking further deep reductions in nuclear armaments with the ultimate goal of their elimination within a specific time-frame.

The question of security assurances has long occupied a position of pre-eminent importance on the disarmament agenda, as an overwhelming majority of non-nuclear States

have called for a recognition of their right not be attacked or threatened with nuclear weapons. The unilateral pledges given last April in the Security Council by the nuclear Powers do not, by themselves, create the necessary confidence that nuclear weapons will not be used. Such declarations leave ample room for subjective interpretations. Such assurances, to be credible, must be reinforced by a firm commitment to non-use of nuclear weapons and to the renunciation of strategic doctrines which offer an immediate and more satisfactory solution to the universal quest for security. There is also the danger that in certain circumstances, especially after the initiation of hostilities, such assurances may be unilaterally withdrawn. They have not been multilaterally negotiated and they are unverifiable. Hence, they do not offer legitimate, reasonable and binding assurances against the valid concerns of non-nuclear States.

In the context of an unacceptable balance of obligations and responsibilities as between the nuclear and the non-nuclear States, it is the legitimate right of parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty which have renounced nuclear weapons to get unconditional and legally binding assurances. Without such iron-clad assurances, the non-nuclear States would remain under the threat or actual use of nuclear weapons and they are therefore committed to a common formulation incorporated in a legal document.

Regional and subregional organizations continue to make substantial contributions to the cause of disarmament and security. At the Second Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), held last August, security issues were addressed in a spirit of mutual respect and equality while emphasis was placed on the importance of developing constructive and cooperative relationships. At the same time, positive progress has been made in resolving the legal and technical aspects of a draft treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. Its realization would be a significant regional contribution to global disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, Indonesia attaches importance to the activities and programmes conducted by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, in Kathmandu. In our continuing endeavours to achieve general and complete disarmament and international security, the Centre has adopted a two-pronged approach. First, it seeks to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and various regional and subregional organizations in their common efforts to strengthen regional peace and global security. Secondly, it gives practical expression to the concept of a regional approach to disarmament, in both the nuclear and the conventional aspects. As the repository of experience and expertise in these areas for five decades, the Organization can, upon the request of the countries concerned, render assistance for regional initiatives. The Centre's primary tasks of assisting the States concerned to address pressing issues, to stimulate new initiatives for negotiations and to explore fresh approaches to disarmament remain largely unfulfilled. My delegation therefore calls for the continuation of its activities.

The Chairman: I have received a request from a member who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind the Committee that the rules in regard to such replies apply. I call on the representative of France.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): The question of nuclear tests has been addressed once again today and I am therefore obliged to recall the facts with regard to France.

For a country like mine whose defence is based *inter alia* on the possession of nuclear weapons and whose arsenal is not overly large, based on the principle of strict sufficiency to which we have voluntarily adhered, the question of a final halt to nuclear testing was a critical one. The decision we ourselves took to ban any further nuclear testing at the end of the present campaign was a difficult one. It was a decision that we assume fully, first with regard to the completion of a limited programme in terms of the number and duration of tests and, secondly, by the decision that we were the first to take, namely, that the scope of the treaty prohibiting nuclear tests should be assimilated to a zero option, that is to say, a total ban on nuclear tests.

The arguments used against nuclear tests are unfounded. First, this programme in no way contradicts the international commitments assumed by France in any context whatsoever. Secondly, the concerns expressed, which my country understands, relating to health, the environment and the stability of the Mururoa Atoll, are concerns not based on any proved facts. Let me say, first of all, how much importance we attach to the safety of the environment and of the population much closer to the Atoll than the Marshall Islands, namely the Polynesian populations, our own citizens, whom we would not wish to expose to any danger, at any price.

Everyone recognizes, I am sure, the unprecedented efforts at transparency that we have made to reassure the international community and enable it to verify what we are saying. The International Atomic Energy Agency will

conduct an impartial assessment at the end of the present programme — but allow me to repeat once again that successive missions over the last 15 years to Mururoa Atoll have all revealed that these tests are harmless.

One of the fears expressed today pertains to the stability of the Atoll. From that standpoint as well, all of the studies that have been conducted and all of the precautions taken guarantee the stability of the volcanic underground rock where our tests are taking place.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of the Marshall Islands in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ronneberg (Marshall Islands): I am deeply sorry to have to take up more of the Committee's time but we need to respond to the right of reply just delivered by the representative of France.

It is indeed ironic that, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the General Assembly dedicated to peace and development, atomic explosions larger than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki have again been detonated in the peaceful surroundings of the South Pacific region.

These explosions are not conducted in metropolitan Europe and, in particular, they are not conducted in the backyards of Paris. It simply demonstrates the very fear of the threat of nuclear tests and the mass public outrage at the resumption of the tests.

The First Committee and the plenary Assembly have been listening patiently to an unprecedented barrage of rights of reply from one delegation, a permanent member of the Security Council, to statements by more than a dozen sovereign States. This continuous slinging of words from that delegation aimed at trying to play down the horrors of nuclear tests has not only clearly illustrated the existence of concern, but assures the international community of the very existence of resistance towards peace and real global stability.

The issue is not about the prerequisites for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, nor is it simply about non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nor is it about French insistence that the tests follow procedures for international safety: the issue at heart is why tests have to be carried out at all. There is simply no justification in today's changing geopolitical situation.

To make my point more clearly I wish to ask this: Just who is the enemy that poses the threat, triggering the doubtful reasons given for resumption by France of nuclear-weapon testing? France has told this Committee that tests are carried out in the South Pacific with due regard for safety. If that is so, if there can be an assurance of safety, why are the tests not being carried out in France? Moreover, what would France's neighbours say if it decided to test in the Bay of Biscay? Are the lives and health of Pacific Islanders worth less than the lives and health of other peoples?

Why, just recently, was there a move from Mururoa Atoll to Fangataufa Atoll for the second test? Was it because of the danger of a landslide — something that has been described in our statements and by scientists? Why does the technology need to be improved so that the destructive capacity is assured and enhanced, when existing technology could destroy this planet 100 times over? It simply does not make any sense.

We express extreme outrage at these tests being carried out in our region. They are in complete contravention of a number of treaties and protocols — for example, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Noumea Convention and the biodiversity Convention. France, as a party to these Treaties and Protocols, has legal as well as moral obligations. During the recent Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty it made these pledges again.

Since 1945 more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been carried out. We do not need any more, anywhere, at any time, for any reason. There is just no reason for these insane weapons. The policy of deterrence through the possession of nuclear weapons of mass destruction is simply absurd. The global implications are serious. There are questions of doubt and suspicion that affect us all, whether we are small or big Powers. The world is now more interrelated than ever, and the questions and doubts expressed by the Pacific countries need to be addressed.

France must comply with the many political, legal and moral obligations deriving from its pledges to the international community at large. France must send to all countries a correct and immediate signal about its genuineness in respect of regional and international obligations.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of France for a second statement in exercise of the right of reply.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): Unfortunately, the statement that has just been made by the representative of the Marshall Islands adds nothing to the debate, so I shall confine myself to referring him to my country's earlier statement.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.